

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Meeting 9:00 A.M.

Thurston County Courthouse
Commissioners' Hearing Room
Olympia, WA 98502

May 16, 2013 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Jim Cook, City of Aberdeen; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Mark Swartout, Town of Bucoda; Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner; Merlin MacReynold, City of Chehalis; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Ken Estes, City of Montesano; Dolores Lee, Town of Pe Ell

Board Members Excused: Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine, Wes Cormier, Grays Harbor County Commissioner

Board Members Absent: Dan Thompson, City of Oakville

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting notes from April 18, 2013
- Power Point on Mary's River and Montesano Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)
- Power Point on Wishkah Rd Project
- Power Point on Satsop Restoration
- Financial Report

WORK SESSION AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and thanked Thurston County for hosting the meeting. Commissioner Valenzuela welcomed everyone and stated the building might be experiencing a lockdown as a training exercise for a terrorist incident or a sharpshooter incident and explained what everyone was expected to do.

2. Introductions

Introductions were made by all attending.

3. Briefing on Alternative Designs for Construction Projects

Mr. Kramer stated that at the last meeting it was requested that projects funded by the state that were in the design phase come back at this meeting to provide alternatives that are being considered. The project sponsors will explain the alternatives.

Mr. Boettcher stated in March there was a discussion with project sponsors, DOE and WDFW about working with the agencies to flesh out permitting requirements. On May 15 Mr. Boettcher met with DOE, WDFW, DNR, Fisheries, the Corps of Engineers and Grays Harbor County. The result of that discussion will be explained at this meeting.

Mary's River Project and Montesano WWTP

Mr. Steve Schmitz is working with Mayor Estes and the City of Montesano on the Mary's River project and the waste water treatment plant. The goals of the Mary's River project are to protect the bank, maintain jobs, protect SR 107 and have no negative environmental impacts. The goals of the wastewater treatment plant are to reduce the risk of structural damage during high flows, and to eliminate the risk of environmental impacts caused by raw sewage mixing with flood waters.

The first PowerPoint was on the Mary's River project.

Mr. Schmitz stated the saw mill was destroyed by fire in August of 2012 and redevelopment is contingent on bank protection. The oxbow has narrowed considerably and there is a good chance that it will break through and the erosion on the bank next to the mill is endangering the mill site.

Some alternatives that have been discussed are: riprap revetment; full channel bypass; high-flow bypass and engineered log jams; sheet piles; impacts from no action by the City. Each alternative includes a summary of how it would be accomplished.

The wastewater treatment plant protection would require a perimeter wall one to two feet in elevation. This could be accomplished with sandbags or ecology blocks. It would be a city process and there are no major hurdles.

Mayor Estes asked how long it would take for the permit process. Mr. Schmitz stated about one year for permitting and design. He felt the construction could be completed in one season. He estimated the oxbow would be cut through in three to ten years.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated oxbows eventually create a lake. She asked what would happen if that was allowed to happen. Mr. Schmitz stated the log jam taking the full flow could destroy the mill.

Mr. Boettcher stated three principles emerged from the meeting: returning the systems back to the natural systems; setting up systems that are self-sustaining and low maintenance; and make sure sheet piles add roughness. Work can still be done on those principles. Sheet piles will be more expensive. Permits will be needed but we have engaged early with the agencies which will help get us through the process. He stated that when the isthmus is cut through it will exacerbate the flow. Where the flow is directed to the bridge is a better solution. Mr. Schmitz stated the velocity was looked at there and it would be minimal if it cut through.

Mr. Swartout stated the Nisqually Tribe did something similar to that in Eatonville. It was a downstream bridge and not a 90 degree but they put in a log jam and it has been successful. He suggested looking at that project.

Mr. Kramer stated the Mary's River project has been described as part of the project that also protects the wastewater treatment plant. He recommended staying consistent in the way this is described by including the protection of the WWTP. He stated the Governor's workgroup is going to be meeting with the Colonel of the Corps to talk about assistance to expedite this. If it seems like a good thing to pursue we need to know the problem so the work group can raise it. Mr. Schmitz stated the problem is excavation cost.

Mr. Kramer stated if the right thing costs more than \$2 million then we must consider the best project cost and seek more funding. He emphasized not keeping the cost as a driver of the project.

Mr. Schmitz stated he will expand on other alternatives brought up by agencies and by the June meeting will have a preferred alternative. Mr. MacReynold asked if Mr. Schmitz knew how long each fix would last. He thought some sounded like shorter term fixes and that should be a consideration because of the money. Mr. Schmitz stated he would work that in.

Perry Lund, DOE, stated that from a permitting perspective if these projects are linked it is a long shot scenario. If they are tied together it will not fly with DOE. Mr. Kramer stated they will not be linked.

Mr. Lund stated the discussion on Wednesday was invaluable. Regarding channelization, there is great value in looking at removing the fill from the 1930's with restoration to get rid of past mistakes. We don't want to fix the 1930's mistakes and create new ones. By putting the river back in the original channel and expecting it to stay there with extreme maintenance is not what we want to see. Connecting the slough and letting the river define how to use the bypass will be tricky between engineering, hydrology and biology. From a permitting standpoint, we need to talk to engineers and agencies. We want to avoid creating a structure that is a new river and expect it to stay there because that will not happen.

Wishkah Road Project

Russ Esses, Grays Harbor County, and Ryan Bartelheimer, AMEC, summarized the project. Mr. Esses explained that the river is not changing very much but when there is a flood event there will be several feet of water between roads. Wishkah Road was raised in the 1980s and it has settled nearly 2' in some areas. Geotechnical studies show it is settling ¼ to ½ foot per year over the entire area because of over-saturated and soft soils. Sheet pile seems to be the best recommendation. Raising the road would create problems for people getting into their driveways and the road would only settle again, so this is not recommended.

A sheet pile flood wall would be reasonable to install although it may need to be designed around logs. The critical issue would be the open culvert. A tide gate would need to go in requiring mitigation or operating the gate at certain flood times.

A levee is another option but a critical issue is the open culvert and soft, settling soils. The river is too close to the road in some places for a levee.

Another option is to relocate the road. This is not feasible because of the cost and it would be difficult to meet state requirements. The estimated cost would be \$10 million. If both roads were left in place the current road would be used except during flooding.

Various alternatives were described. The design and permit considerations include the open culvert at Baretich Rd; no tide gate due to the presence of fish; wetland impacts; access to gas regulator station; evaluate the feasibility of raising portions of the road to reduce costs; and sizing of drainage structures through the wall. The purchase of residences on the east side of the road could be considered to restore the floodplain, remove potential water quality threats and provide potential habitat improvement opportunities. The cost of the project is \$3-4 million. It would be feasible to build the sheet wall and critical things to consider are ground settling and fish passage. Mr. Kramer stated there

is \$2.6 million earmarked for this project. Mr. Boettcher stated AMEC will look at phased implementation to get to the end project.

Discussion followed regarding the scope of the project and whether there is enough analysis provided. Mr. Kramer stated that if there is a debate about the benefit it needs to be settled before the project is launched.

Satsop River Floodplain Restoration Project

Mr. Jeff Johnson, hydraulic engineer for WSE, explained the goals of the project: to reduce erosion, save farm soil, and to create better fish and wildlife habitat. The agencies attending the meeting were confused by the name of the project and Mr. Johnson suggested changing it to include the goals.

The proposed method to achieve these goals is to remove 5200 feet of dike and 2500 feet of riprap. Hopefully this would reduce erosion and create habitat by allowing the river to reoccupy its natural channel migration zone and allow the water to spread out across the floodplain. There does not appear to be much downside to removing the 5200 feet of dike. It is not recommended to remove 2/3 of the length of the riprap but there may be opportunities to remove the lower 1/3. This, however, would increase the uncertainty of erosion but it would improve habitat.

Mr. Johnson stated there needs to be more discussion regarding removing the revetment. A meeting was held with the County and the landowners and an alternatives matrix was created to consider repairs to the revetments, channel modifications, local bank erosion countermeasures and complete restoration of the gravel pond site.

Mr. Johnson stated WSE has been instructed to bring the existing scope to conclusion. There are a few more things to complete. The investigation will be wrapped up in June and in the meantime the next step will be worked out. This may be a project to work in phases or steps. Funding was for \$500,000 and vague about the uses of the money.

Mr. Esses stated that WSE was asked to stay on task and look at the riprap removal. If the project is not going to be done there is no point in going through the permitting process.

4. Discussion of Proposed Budget to Assess Local Jurisdictions Floodplain Management Programs

Mr. Kramer stated that the capital budget request is still intact and once the Legislature passes the budget the Chehalis piece will be supported. There is \$1,750,000 for looking at how the jurisdictions in the Basin are managing the floodplain, i.e.: flood awareness, flood warning, flood proofing, etc., against the community-based Federal management CRS program. \$250,000 was the consultant piece to do the initial work and \$1.5 million to buy out homes or to flood-proof structures. Mr. Kramer asked if the Flood Authority should provide the oversight for that work and if it should be included in the budget or should another organization be considered to provide oversight for the budget. He thought it would be a good fit for the Flood Authority because it affects all of the jurisdictions in the Basin.

Mr. Averill thought it would be a good fit for the Flood Authority and stated that a basin-wide Flood Hazard Management Plan (FHMP) was developed previously by Flood Authority consultant ESA Adolfson. ESA Reviewed each jurisdiction's FHMP in developing the basin-wide plan in consultation with the Flood Authority. Subsequently, all of the Flood Authority jurisdictions (at that time) adopted the model plan. If that is used as a base then recent changes could be included. Commissioner Fund gave a thumb's up. Mr. Estes asked if part of the money would be included in the Flood Authority budget to

help pay for it. Mr. Kramer stated it would be similar to what was done with the development of the hydraulic model and Anchor. There will be some added costs for administration by Lewis County as the fiscal agent.

The group asked Mr. Kramer to bring a budget to the next meeting.

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 10:35 and dispensed with introductions.

3. Approval of Agenda

There were no corrections or additions and the agenda was approved.

4. Approval of April 18 Meeting Notes

There were no changes to the meeting notes and they were approved.

5. Public Comment

Ms. Deanna Zieske stated the telephone meetings were inconvenient to her because her business line had to be tied up during the conference call. She understood the budgetary issues but asked if there was an alternative. Commissioner Fund invited Ms. Zieske to join in the meeting in the Commissioner's office. Thurston and Grays Harbor Counties could also look into a room where people could go to be involved. Chair Raines suggested that perhaps an on-line audio could be arranged for callers to at least listen to the conversation, if not participate.

6. Reports

a. Chair's Report

Chair Raines stated the Basin projects are still in the capital budget and she is cautiously optimistic. Representative Tharinger thought they would remain in the budget but said \$2 million might be cut for administrative use. Chair Raines stated there are many projects and we will need technical help from agencies. Representative Tharinger did not understand that. He will meet with Senator Dunshee and ask for an explanation.

b. Member Reports

Commissioner Fund gave an update on Education and Outreach. The committee met with the Olympia Master Builders and they commended the Flood Authority. Invitations for the presentation were requested from Sertoma, Economic Development Council and Grays Harbor College.

Bucoda – Mr. Swartout stated this meeting would be his last face-to-face meeting as he is retiring. He thanked everyone on the Flood Authority for their work.

Cosmopolis – Chairman Raines stated the preliminary meetings have been held regarding the approval of the Mill Creek Dam. She is hopeful it will be presented in July.

Chehalis – Mr. MacReynold stated the levee project is proceeding. There are some issues but the plan is scheduled to go out for bid. Construction will be a little later than hoped.

Montesano – Mr. Estes asked if it has been settled about the payment for the gauges or if the local jurisdictions are still responsible. He was told there needs to be discussion on that issue.

Pe Ell – Ms. Lee stated Pe Ell hopes to be meeting with an engineering firm to determine what preliminary work needs to be done for their sewer treatment plant. She hopes to have information at the next meeting.

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

Mr. Butch Ogden stated the last critter pad is under construction and the last evacuation route is set for fencing. There will be a public meeting on May 23 at 6:00 p.m. at Baw Faw Grange to solicit public input for more people who are interested in critter pads and evacuation routes. It appears that the projects will come in under budget.

Mr. Kramer stated he has had discussions with WDFW regarding Travis Nelson's replacement. WDFW is more engaged than they have been in the past and they are anxious to participate in the next biennium. Mr. Kramer stated their absence does not mean they are not interested in the Basin.

7. Financial Report

Ms. Napier summarized the financial report; there were no questions.

8. Confirm next regular meeting, topics and location

The next meeting will be a telephone meeting on June 20. The July meeting will be in Lewis County. A tour of the Chehalis levees was suggested and Chair Raines wanted to see what might be on the agenda before that decision was made.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.